

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 106255
ORIGIN SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 106255

EXDIS, ABIDJAN FOR SCHAUFELE, BUCHANAN AND CUTLER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV, PFOR, PINS, AO, US

SUBJECT: FLEC THREAT TO CABINDA GULF

;: GULF OIL REPRESENTATIVES CALLED AT DEPARTMENT MAY 10
TO CONVEY FOLLOWING.

2. ON MAY 9, BERNARD BORY, REPORTEDLY CHIEF OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF SELF-STYLED "PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT" OF CABINDA,
MET WITH NORMAN LEWIS, VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT AGRE-
EMENTS IN GULF'S LONDON OFFICE.

BORY STATED THAT A DIRECT ATTACK ON GULF INSTALLATIONS
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IN CABINDA WOULD BE MADE PRIOR TO MAY 15. HE STATED THAT
FLEC NOW CONTROLS ONE-HALF TO TWO-THIRDS OF THE TERRITORY
IN CABINDA INCLUDING AN AIRPORT (BELIZE?). HE STATED THAT
FLEC MILITARY ELEMENTS WANT TO PRESS AN ATTACK UPON GULF
INSTALLATIONS IN CABINDA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SINCE OTHER-
WISE TIME WOULD WORK AGAINST THEM AND PERMIT CUBANS AND
ANGOLANS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR DEFENSIVE POSITION. BORY

SAID THAT GULF HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED BY FLEC AS THE ENEMY SINCE IT PROVIDES MONEY TO ANGOLA WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO THAT GOVERNMENT. HE WARNED GULF THAT IT SHOULD WITHDRAW ITS PERSONNEL FROM CABINDA AND URGED LEWIS TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. HE INDICATED

THAT IF GULF REFUSED TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT, FLEC WOULD ATTACK AROUND MAY 15 OR EARLIER. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT FLEC WOULD DELAY SUCH AN ATTACK FOR A DAY OR TWO IF GULF ANNOUNCED ITS WITHDRAWAL.

BORY CLAIMED THAT FLEC HAS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FOR ITS ACTIVITIES SINCE, ACCORDING TO BORY, BRAZZAVILLE IS NOW FRIENDLY TO FLEC. WHILE HE RECOGNIZED THAT ANY FLEC INTERRUPTION OF OIL PRODUCTION IN CABINDA MIGHT BE ONLY TEMPORARY, HE STRESSED THAT FLEC HAS THE MILITARY STRENGTH TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH INTERRUPTIONS.

LEWIS TRAVELED TO KINSHASA MAY 9 FOR A FULL DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER WITH GULF'S LOCAL MANAGER, CHARLES SMITH, AND WILL RETURN DIRECTLY TO LONDON.

3. GULF REPRESENTATIVES ASKED DEPARTMENT'S ESTIMATE OF FLEC INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES. THEY WERE TOLD WE SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ON WHICH TO BASE A USEFUL JUDGEMENT BUT NOTED THAT ANY ARMED ELEMENTS COULD CAUSE AT LEAST SOME DAMAGE TO SUCH VULNERABLE INSTALLATIONS IF DETERMINED TO DO SO. DEPT. ALSO URGED THAT GULF ARRANGE TO HAVE LEWIS DISCUSS SITUATION WITH CHARGE IN KINSHASA.
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GULF REPS SAID THEY WOULD ATTEMPT DO THIS IF LEWIS STILL IN KINSHASA.

4. DEPT HAS BEEN IN DAILY CONTACT WITH GULF REPS SINCE CONVEYING THREAT REPORTED LISBON 3568 ON MAY 6. GULF IS OF COURSE CONCERNED THAT CURRENT THREAT MIGHT PROVE LESS HOLLOW THAN PREVIOUS FLEC APPROACHES, BUT INTENDS CONTINUE NORMAL OPERATIONS UNLESS LEWIS' CONVERSATIONS IN KINSHASA LEAD TO DIFFERENT DECISIONS.

5. REQUEST EMBASSY EVALUATION OF BORY CLAIMS AS MADE TO GULF.

6. FOR ABIDJAN: IF AMBS.SCHAUFELD AND CUTLER BELIEVE AN APPROACH TO GOZ WOULD BE USEFUL IN ELICITING INFORMATION ON THIS THREAT OR POSSIBLY HEADING OFF ITS IMPLEMENTATION, REQUEST EMBASSY KINSHASA BE SO INSTRUCTED. CHRISTOPHER

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